

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 27, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
H-232, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Senate Majority Leader  
S-221, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Schumer:

We thank you for your continued leadership and partnership in delivering transformational change for our constituents. As leaders in the House Democratic freshman class, we are deeply invested in supporting your efforts to meet all the legislative needs of the moment. In the coming months, our Democratic majorities will be making critical decisions on this year's must-pass legislation. To that end, we write to you today regarding next steps on this year's National Defense Authorization Act.

On September 23, the House voted to approve H.R. 4350: National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022. We were disappointed to see Republicans secure inclusion of an additional \$25 billion in the bill beyond the \$743 billion in topline funding requested by the Biden Administration. We ask that as the House and Senate work toward a final version of the FY2022 NDAA, we restore topline funding to a level that allows us to defend our nation and promote global security while also curbing waste.

For years, our Democratic caucus has acknowledged the need to address wasteful defense spending. Excessive defense spending not only stresses our budget, but it diverts our limited resources away from updating our nation's crumbling infrastructure, addressing climate change, expanding childcare and paid leave, ensuring universal access to healthcare, and addressing historic inequities to ensure all our constituents can achieve the promise of America.

In the House, our Democratic leaders worked hard to implement in H.R. 4350 the level of spending requested by the Biden Administration. Unfortunately, when H.R. 4350 was marked up in the House Committee on Armed Services, Republicans successfully passed an amendment bloating the bill's spending billions beyond what is required to achieve the Biden Administration's defense strategy. When the bill reached the floor, we supported the Jacobs/Lee amendment to return the bill to its original spending levels. The majority of House Democrats joined us. Unfortunately, the amendment did not pass, and we were faced with voting on a legislative product that did not meet our party's longstanding goal of spending smarter when it comes to defense.

This was particularly disappointing given how hard that House and Committee leadership had worked on achieving key priorities in the bill. The Democratic-written House bill raises servicemember pay, invests in servicemember childcare and quality of life, combats sexual assault in the military, invests in relocations from Afghanistan, provides for PFAS cleanup, and

more. Perhaps most importantly, the final bill includes hundreds of amendments from members that make the bill better, including our own. However, Republicans made a major imprint on the product with their attempt to bloat defense spending — all while fighting key Build Back Better investments at every turn.

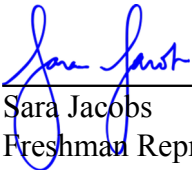
We cast “nay” votes on final passage of H.R. 4350 to prompt bicameral efforts to restore the bill’s funding to a level that meets the goal of the Democratic caucus to reduce wasteful defense spending. We urge you to work toward this goal in a final NDAA legislative vehicle while preserving the wins members and leadership achieved in the House product. This is our chance to chart a path toward thoughtful defense budgeting. We look forward to working with you on the best possible final FY22 NDAA and the goals we share as a Democratic caucus.

Sincerely,



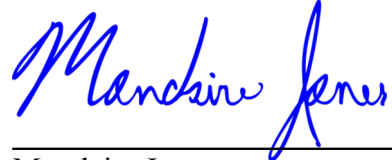
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Nikema Williams  
Freshman Class President  
Member of Congress



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Sara Jacobs  
Freshman Representative to  
House Democratic Policy and  
Steering Committee  
Member of Congress



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Mondaire Jones  
Freshman Representative to  
House Leadership  
Member of Congress